10

A Christian Pacifick:

BEING

An affectionate Vote for the mutual *LOVE* and *AGREEMENT* of all *PROTESTANTS*; as Things neceſſary in point of *CONSCIENCE*, and *COMMON SAFETY*.

By a Member of the Church of *England*.

THE *Diviſions* of any Body of People are their dangerous Wounds, whereby their *Blood* and *Spirits* will be ſo drein'd, that hereby the ſtrongeſt Nation may become a Prey to the weakeſt. For neither Rocks nor Seas, Fenc'd Cities nor *Fleets*, can make that People ſafe, who by *Diſcord* and *Diſtruſt* cut the Sinews of their own Strength. So that wherever an Enemy has ſucceſs in dividing any People, he will ſoon have the ſatisfaction of deſtroying them; and will find this the cheapeſt and ſureſt way of Conquering.

The *Proteſtant Body* need not be told that they are encompaſs'd with numerous and formidable Enemies abroad, and what is much worſe, intermingled with them at home, like corrupt Humors in the Maſs of Blood; all actually combined, and formed with one conſent againſt them; bent by their Principles, and engag'd by Vows to root out what they call the *Northern Hereſy*. And their Paſſions are not a little exaſperated by a ſurprizing diſappointment which befel them about 12 Years ago, with the Abdication of their *zealous Promoter*, at a time when they hoped to have ſeen a ſucceſs of another Nature. So that now, like *Evening Wolves* ſharpened by Hunger, they ſhew their Teeth, and muſter up their ſtrength to fly at the whole Flock, which they have already divided into Parcels; and nothing diſcourages them from making the ſeizure, ſo much as that they do not yet ſee the *brave Shepherd*'s Head laid to Reſt, which makes them look on him with Eyes full of Rage, Rancor, and Spight; and what would they not venture? What would they not give? I had almoſt ſaid, What would they not Sacrifice to their *reputed Patrons* above, or *real Confederats* below, to procure the Fall of this *dreaded Hero* any way, tho' never ſo ſhameful and flagitious?

O! How dear ought this *Royal Patriot* to be to all that love the *Reform'd Religion*, eſpecially to his own People, to whom he is as the *Breath of their Noſtrils*, and with whom many of their *Deareſt Enjoyments* are like to expire.

Now, in theſe Circumſtances of common apparent Danger, the inteſtine Feuds and Animoſities of *Proteſtants* cannot but be look'd on as a moſt *fatal Infatuation*; becauſe ſuch as are overheated by private Paſſions, have uſually little warmth for the *common Good*, and little Spirit againſt the *common Enemy*. Yea, they are too too apt to conceive a ſort of infernal Delight in the Foreſight of a common Deſtruction, becauſe in it their private Adverſaries will be ruined as well as themſelves; like the fighting of a pair of Cocks, who engage ſo eagerly in their petty Quarrel, that any one may take up both of them and wring off their Necks.

And as the care of the *Publick Safety*, ſo the Zeal of *Religion* evaporates this way too. For, whatever the pretence be, 'tis the want of ſound Religion, and of the true Spirit of *Chriſt* and *Chriſtianity*, that is at the bottom of all our intemperate Heats about things undetermined in the Holy Scriptures. *For the Wiſdom from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, and eaſy to be entreated, and it is ſown in Peace.* And a Chriſtian *is not to pleaſe himſelf but his Brother for his Good to Edification.*

Theſe our Diviſions are the Laughter of our Enemies, and the Sorrow of our Friends. Yea, ſerious and judicious Minds behold theſe Differences with amazement, ſince they can ſee no ſuch Matters in Diſpute amongſt *Proteſtants* but what Wiſe and Good Men might either compoſe with a gentle Hand, or cover with a Vail of Charity and mutual Forbearance. And till there appear in the Body of Proteſtants competent Diſpoſitions to do this, by that univerſal Love and Tenderneſs which is the Property of Chriſtians, the *Proteſtant Intereſt* will lie in a languiſhing, or rather in a deſperate Condition. For there can be no way of eſcaping that *overflowing Scourge* which we ſee our great and powerful Enemies preparing for us, but by a *general Union and Agreement* among our ſelves. Our only Hope is, that ſince the Diviſions of Proteſtants appear ſo ſlightly grounded, they may by the nearer Proſpect of their Ruin be the more heartily determined to mutual Affection and Concord; and chuſe rather to be preſerved by their Friends than devoured by their Enemies.

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And indeed we may learn this Point of Policy and *Moderation* from our Enemies of the *Church of Rome*; who tho' they are divided in their *Opinions* more than we, yet they shut none of them out of their *Communion*, if they do but agree in some few principal Points; by which *politick Conduct* they strengthen themselves, and make no *desperate Parties*. Yea, by this they become a *compact Body* against us on all Occasions.

This is the rather to be hoped, because our Divisions carry on all sides some Persons of Piety, Prudence, and Moderation, Men of Sober Principles, cool Thought, and good Lives; from whom, as from *Primitive Worthies*, great things are to be hoped in such a Season as this. For to such, nothing can appear more necessary than the speedy adjustment of such Measures as are requisite to the *Common safety*. We cannot indeed expect to compose the confusions of a *Bedlam* all of a sudden, be the event what it will; but Wise and Good Men carry the Principles of Union and Condescension in their very Constitution; and all Christians who enjoy the blessing of their *Bibles*, find there such weighty Injunctions of *Brotherly Love*, *Forbearance* and all *good Offices*, that they cannot long resist the force of them, when once the Clouds of Prejudice, and the fumes of Passion are so dispersed, that the importance of these weighty Duties appear in a clear Light.

The sweet and *blessed Gospel* of our Lord is such a System of *good Will towards Men*, that we could not fall out, at least not long, nor very fiercely, if we duly embraced it. For there it is required that, we be *meek as Lambs, innocent as Doves*, and *merciful even as God himself*; and in short, it tends to reduce the World to such a state of Peace and Love, Agreement and Harmony, as resembles; yea, revives the calm and happy State of the *Primitive Paradise*.

And if any ill Person, who is as yet a stranger to this new State of the *Kingdom of Heaven* below, should revile or hurt such as are *Christians*, they are not to answer him according to his Principles but their own, and to return him good for Evil, till he be even *melted* down into a temper like theirs, by the pure Flames of their *Christian Charity*. And if, in this Case, any ones wicked Heart should be slow in forgiving his Brother that has trespassed against him, 'tis enough to quicken his Forgiveness, when he reads that *God will not hear his Prayers nor forgive his Trespasses, except he from his Heart forgives the Trespasses of his Brother*.

'Tis not agreeable to the Temper, Laws, or Design of this blessed Dispensation of the Gospel, nor suteable to the Spirit and sweetness of the great Master of it, that such as have Power over others should set themselves up as Lords over their Consciences; and then beat and torture Men into their Notions of things, right or wrong; especially in Religious Matters, where God is the sole Director. Yea, we find no warrant in the Gospel to compel Men by Cruelties to embrace the *Christian Faith*; for in truth this were not to bring Men to be God's Servants, but to be the Slaves of Imperious Men; and without chusing God's ways, and loving God for his Purity, they would want the necessary Principles of real Piety and Devotion.

It does indeed mightily please that natural Pride and Fondness which Men have to their own Notions, to bring all Men to bow to their Sentiments about things undetermined by God, but this can never be expected, because there's no real Foundation for such a strict Unity in indifferent Things, to, or against which they will be variously inclin'd, according to their different Capacities, Education, Improvements, and Apprehensions; and tho' Force and Cruelty may make them cover or dissemble their Sentiments, yet it does not alter them. And that we are not to expect on Earth any thing like a perfect Harmony in our Sentiments about lesser Matter, seems to be evident from the many Laws which God has given us about *mutual tolerance*, *charitable Constructions*, *condescention to the weak*, and a compassionate *bearing with one another* in this State of Infirmity. And perhaps there may be some use too in this variety of tolerable differences, in that they may tend to quicken and enliven each other by way of Emulation, and be a means to prevent the Lethargy of a general Formality.

In the Essentials of our holy Faith and Doctrine, which God hath made know to us, we are required to be of *one Heart and one Mind*; as also in the great Points of *Morality*, which are as certain as our Faculties. And since all *Protestants* are agreed in these Things, they are manifestly agreed in more than they can differ about; and therefore in Reason, the greater Agreement ought to swallow up the lesser Differences. And indeed it will appear to be a rank piece of Carnality, to be more concern'd about the Modes of Religion, which are of Mens ordering, than about the Substance of it, which is immediately, and only from God. And where any People love those of their own Persuasion in these Matters, tho' they savour not the things that be of God, more than others manifestly Pious that are of other Opinions in these indifferent things; and are well enough pleased with the bitterness of others against them; 'tis very dreadful to consider how highly this Guilt advances, and how near it approaches to the horrible Sin of *Apostacy*, in that they are rather the Servants of Men than of God, in the Religion they profess.

And whereas the Names of *Luther* and *Calvin*, and others, are now as dear to many as the greater Names of *Paul* and *Apollo* of old: It deserves to be considered, that none of these over-valued Denominations will be so much as mention'd in the last Day, but we shall all be put to this one Question, Who is a real Christian? A faithful Follower of the *Lord Jesus Christ*? And the Spirit of God hath already

dy determined it, that ſuch as divided about *Paul* and *Apollo* themſelves, *were carnal and walkt as Men*, i. e. as the unregenerate. 1 *Cor.* 3. 4.

And ſurely 'tis Time for all Chriſtians to conſider what diſhonour their Diviſions have done to their great Lord and Maſter, and what Miſchief they will do in the World, till they are taken out of the way.

In the firſt place, the variance of Chriſtians is a direct means to Scandalize and harden the *Jews*, when they look into the *Prophecies* concerning the Days of the *Meſſiah*, where they find the Love and Peace of Chriſtians deſcribed in ſuch ſtrains as tend to make them expect the return of the innocent and peaceful ſtate of *Eden* upon Earth. Particularly the *Prophet Iſaiah* foretells, That in the Days of the Prince of Peace, *the Wolf ſhould dwell* inoffenſively *with the Lamb, and the Leopard lye down* lovingly *with the Kid: That the Calf and the young Lion and the Fatling ſhould live together* without variance, and be ſo gentle that the *young Child might lead them. That the Cow and the Bear ſhould feed together, and their young ones lye down together, and the Lion* (quite alienated from his delight in Blood) *ſhould eat Straw like the Ox. That the ſucking Child ſhould play upon the hole of the Aſp, and the weaned Child put his Hand on the Cockatrice Den.* And in Sum, that *none ſhould hurt or deſtroy in all God's holy Mountain.* Iſa. 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. This plainly imports that the Precepts and *Spirit of Chriſtianity* ſhould ſweeten the moſt bitter, and ſmooth the moſt violent and furious Tempers of Men, ſo that laying by all Envy, Malice, Deceit and Cruelty, they ſhould become *Gentle, Harmleſs* and *Inoffenſive*. And where our Divine Religion prevails, this is the certain Effect of it. But now the *Jew* may well ask where we can ſhew this Divine Love and Peace among Chriſtians? And in truth, this Queſtion introduces another very ſad one, *viz.* How rarely can we find *genuin Chriſtianity?* Let us at once bluſh and tremble at the Queſtion, and let every Soul earneſtly ſeek that Grace of God which may enable us to give a more direct and full Anſwer to this important Query.

For, alas! it cannot but harden *Turks* and *Pagans*, in their Infidelity, to obſerve ſuch diſagreeing Tempers, and unſubdued Paſſions, under ſuch a heavenly Diſpenſation as that of the bleſſed Goſpel, which abounds with ſuch ſublime Injunctions of Love and Peace, ſuch incomparable Examples of Patience and Meekneſs; and ſuch infinite Promiſes to the makers of Peace. I am aſſur'd that a Turk who lately heard one read that Precept of our Lord (*Mat.* 5. 44.) *But I ſay unto you, Love your Enemies, bleſs them that Curſe you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which diſpitefully uſe You and perſecute You:* reply'd, that he could not believe thoſe worthy Commands were any part of the *Chriſtian* Religion, becauſe he never had ſeen any thing like it in the Practice of *Chriſtians*. O bleſſed Followers of the Lamb, how are ye concerned to wipe off this Stain, and to take away this Reproach of *Iſrael*?

It deſerves alſo to be conſider'd, how far the Diſſentions and Bitterneſs of *Proteſtants* one towards the other, may tend to harden *Papiſts* in their Cruelties towards them all; who may ſay, if Proteſtants do what they can to impoveriſh, ſtarve and ruin ſuch as differ from them; only in Circumſtantials, by their own Confeſſion; How can they blame our Rigor towards them from whom we differ in Eſſential Points, and do not think them in the way of Salvation?

Yea farther, our *Diviſions* give too great occaſion to Men of *Atheiſtical Principles*, and profane Lives, to reject the whole concern of Religion; and to account it no better than the Product of Men's Humors and ſecular Intereſts; ſince otherwiſe, ſay they, ſuch as agree in the chief Points of it would be more loving and friendly to one another, as their Religion teaches them to be; which yet we ſee they matter not, when ever their private Intereſts and Sentiments interfere. Surely *We will be to ſuch by whom this Offence comes.*

Finally, it is at this Gap of our Diviſions that our Enemies hope to make a ſucceſsful Inrode to cut us off Root and Branch without Remedy, and if the *carnal ſecurity* of ſome, and the *rigid Bitterneſs* of others amongſt us continue as they are, they will, without a Miracle, carry their Point. For we have intelligence of their daily Conſults and Intrigues. We ſee ſome Princes and great Men of this World taken in their Nets, and we behold their bold and open Advances to deſtroy us. And the miſery of all is, we ſee nothing like Union and mutual Confidence in Proteſtants to meet and oppoſe them.

It has been the Wiſh and Endeavor of many wiſe and great Men, that the unhappy Differences betwixt the *Lutherans* and *Calviniſts* might be compoſed by Chriſtian Moderation; and that by the ſame ſalutary Expedient, a larger Body of Proteſtants might be comprehended in the *Engliſh Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*; which would be a greater blow to Popery than all the Volumes which have been written againſt it. For tho' theſe have excellently diſcovered their *Forgery, Novelty, Paganiſm* and *Idolatry*, yet where Papiſts have power they will obtrude their Corruptions and falſe Worſhip in the ſame manner that the haughty *Nebuchadnezar* did his Idolatry, and *ſuch as will not fall down and worſhip*, as they do, *ſhall the ſame hour be worſe handed than to be thrown into the midſt of a burning fiery Furnace.* Yea, the Popiſh Idolatry is worſe than the *Babyloniſh*, or any Pagan Idolatry; for *Nebuchadnezar* could not think that the Golden Image which he had newly cauſed to be ſet up, and which owed its Dignity to his Order concerning it, was *the God that made him and all things*; but he thought perhaps that ſome *divine Virtue* was ſomeway Communicable by it: But the *Papiſts*

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vow that the *Wafer* made by a *common Baker*, and bleſt by their Prieſt, *is the God that made and upholds all things*, and they burn, rack and cut Men in pieces by Scourging, if they will not embrace this flat and indefenſible Idolatry. And on this account many excellent Men of great Piety and Worth are at this Day *Dragoon'd*, condemn'd to the *Gallies*, buried in *Dungeons*, and mangled and Maſſacred by an unheard of *Baſtonade* in the *French Dominions*.

And when the ſame Scourges are preparing for our Backs, does it not concern all *Proteſtants* of what *Denomination* or *Country* ſoever to abandon the leſſer concerns of *Trade*, *private Intereſt* and *Opinion*; and whatſoever elſe obſtructs a good Underſtanding and Agreement amongſt themſelves? And to betake themſelves with ſpeed to the Chriſtian preſcription of *brotherly kindneſs*, and *Union* and *Agreement*, as the laſt and only Remedy to theſe approaching Evils: and that the whole Body of Proteſtants maintain a conſtant Correſpondence, and give all deſirable aſſurance to one another of their readineſs to ſupport the common Safety.

Men of Piety and Prudence will in this Caſe act openly and profeſſedly by the *Chriſtian Rules* of Moderation, Condeſcention, Compaſſion and Coalition. And when once diſcreet and good Men ſet about the compoſing of our Differences without prejudice and partiality, and with a juſt ſence of the *Duty* and *Safety* of our Agreement, and of the *Danger*, yea *Deſtruction* of the contrary, we can ſee nothing that lies in their way to hinder a common Union that is of weight to counterballance the mighty Reaſons which incline, enforce, and neceſſitate it.

But if we will not freely embrace theſe *Chriſtian Principles* of our ſelves, we are very like to be ſcourged into them by the *Scorpions* wherewith our Brethren the *French Confeſſors* are laſh'd. And then we ſhall forget our inconſiderable diſcords about little Matters, like the bleſſed Martyrs *Biſhop Ridley*, and *Biſhop Hooper*, who forgat their diſputes about Ceremonies, at the Stake, and firſt embraced each other with Flames of Charity, and then yielded their Bodies to be burnt in the ſame Pile.

When all theſe things are laid together, we cannot but ſee, that all *Proteſtants* have at this day as great reaſon to Unite, as an Army divided by the different Sentiments of their Captains, when a very powerful Army appears to cut them all off at once. Yea, what's more, as great Reaſon as ſuch who have offended Almighty God, have to repent and forſake their Sin, when they are going to appear before his Judgment Seat. For God ſeems to be actually on his way to puniſh the Inhabitants of the Earth for their Sins, amongſt which the *Diviſions* and *uncharitableneſs* of *Proteſtants* to one another make no ſmall part.

May we all then, at leaſt in the laſt Hour of this our Day, diſcern the things which belong to our Peace; may all that own the *Reformed Religion*, even Princes, Magiſtrates, Miniſters, and all others, act in their ſeveral Stations as from one common Soul for the vital Intereſts of TRUTH, LIBERTY, PEACE, and SALVATION. *Amen, Amen.*

The E N D.

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